

OFFICE OF
THE SECRETARY OF STATE /DCD/MR
WASHINGTON

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Dear Griffin:

I wish to bring to your attention the problem of the build-up of Soviet refugees in Italy, most of whom are seeking immigration to the United States. There are some 4,000 such refugees, mainly Jews, in Italy now and the number is expected to exceed 5,000 by the end of the current year. This accumulation has resulted in part from the increased drop-out rate in Vienna from the flow of Soviet refugees to Israel and the decreased rate of processing for U.S. immigration, the latter being due to the lack of non-preference visa numbers and the limited availability of numbers under the provisions of Section 203(a)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

The accumulation of ever-increasing numbers of Soviet refugees in an asylum area such as Italy could become an embarrassment to that government and might adversely affect Soviet Jewish emigration. Moreover, extended delays in immigration processing frequently cause difficulties for the persons involved and result in high care and maintenance costs to the United States Refugee Program (USRP) and the Voluntary Agencies.

For these various reasons I should like to recommend that in order to overcome this backlog of cases in Italy you exercise your parole authority under Section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit entry into the United States during the six month period ending May 1, 1978 of 5,000 Jews and others from the Soviet Union who have left the USSR with exit visas for the U.S., or used exit permits for Israel as a means of leaving the Soviet Union in order to get to the United States, and

The Honorable
Griffin Bell,
Attorney General.

otherwise meet standard criteria for admission to the United States. I further recommend that you continue to exercise your parole authority for such refugees on a continuing need basis beyond May 1, 1978, or until such time as appropriate legislation is enacted to authorize their admission under regular immigration procedures.

I believe that the judicious use of the parole authority is fully consistent with Congressional intent for assistance to Soviet refugees and in keeping with our own humanitarian traditions.

Warm regards,

Cyrus Vance